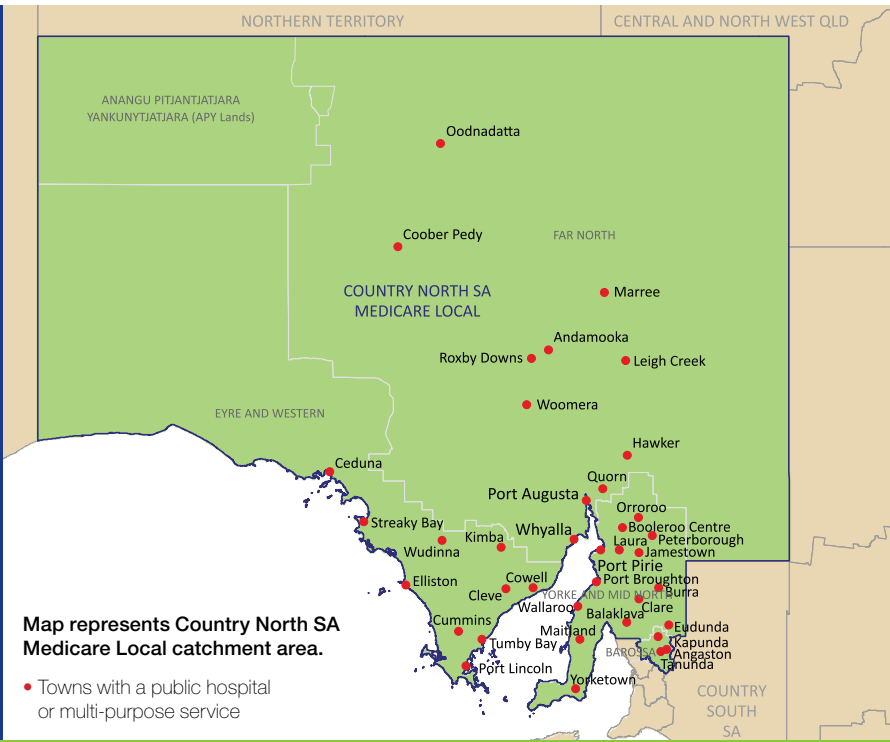




# medicare local

## COUNTRY NORTH SA



## COUNTRY NORTH SA MEDICARE LOCAL

Medicare Locals are one of the cornerstones of health reform in Australia. They will coordinate primary health care delivery and tackle health care needs and service gaps at a local level.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCAL AREA:

The Country North SA Medicare Local spans the northern rural area of South Australia. It comprises networks of communities, each network distant from the other and creating a unique demographic profile within Australia. The vast distance covered by the region is a challenge to providing health services. Additional challenges relate to the diversity of the

population and their needs. Key challenges to health planning include remoteness, transport, access to services (including mental health), increasing chronic disease, the needs of the high proportion of Aboriginal people, an ageing population, and how to attract and retain a strong health and medical workforce.

## New activities as a Medicare Local:

To meet the strategic objectives for a Medicare Local, the Country North SA Medicare Local will undertake a range of activities that will initially include:

- Increase the number of visiting specialist services, utilising their expertise to design and deploy continuing professional development programs for GPs and allied health professionals.
- Create an integrated local network of GP and allied health providers that are accessible for every patient to receive the services they require.
- Create a service model which will guarantee the effective placement of services, identify service growth needs, ensure the cost efficiency and effectiveness of resources, and avoid duplication.
- Develop, support and facilitate e-health strategies, including a potential single patient e-health record.
- Develop closer links with hospital liaison officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient pathways officers in regional hospitals, which will be prefaced by a high level agreement with the Local Hospitals Network.

## Achievements to date:

The constituent Divisions have undertaken activities including:

- Display strong support, education and training for international medical graduates.
- Coordinate the acute and primary care sectors, with all rural and remote GPs providing acute care delivery within their local hospitals.
- Identify local service gaps through discussions with local GPs and Country Health SA to determine service use, reduce duplication, and identify opportunities to provide additional primary health services.
- Work closely with the Aboriginal Health Service, psychiatrists, GPs, and the Social and Emotional Well Being team to provide seamless integrated mental health services to patients.
- Engage regularly with the Country Health Network to plan and review the provision of primary care and acute services across the region.

## Local partnerships:

The Country North SA Medicare Local has existing partnerships with Barossa General Practice Network, Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice, Flinders and Far North Division of General Practice, Mid North Division of Rural Medicine and Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice. The Medicare Local will engage stakeholder and community groups. The Medicare Local will build on the existing and long established relationships of the Divisions including community organisations, Health Advisory Councils, local government, local advisory groups and forums, other local agencies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, workforce organisations, the broader primary health care sector and research organisations.

## Consultation mechanisms and structure:

The Country North SA Medicare Local is structured within five “departments” of activity. Four are regions of operational delivery and one provides policy, strategy and service development activities and an overarching structure to coordinate and support regional operations.

The four operational regions, Eyre and West, Northern, Wakefield and Barossa, are aligned with State-provided Country Health areas to ensure effective coordination of Medicare Local activities with the state. Local Area Health Networks and Remote and Aboriginal Community Health Networks will comprise the key functional unit, with officers engaged and empowered to support and facilitate their work.

The Medicare Local will be structured to focus on localised, customised services, within defined regions. This will discourage “one size fits all” activities. The structure will be supported by overarching policy, strategy and service development activities, that will support quality and consistency of services and cost of service, through economies of scale.

The policy, strategy and services development “department” will draw upon expertise within the regions, for use across the organisation and to coordinate activities and ensure quality of service delivery, in all areas of activity.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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